

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 PRS-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /055 W

-----161438Z 064110 /43

P R 161351Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8904

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 0346

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MA, US

SUBJECT: CHARGE PAYS FAREWELL CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER

1. MY 45-MINUTE FAREWELL CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER RAKOTOMAVO, FOR WHICH WE WERE GIVEN LESS THAN ONE HOUR'S NOTICE, COVERED CURRENT STATUS OF US-MALAGASY RELATIONS.

2. TAKING MY LEAD FROM VARIOUS MESSAGES FROM THE DEPT, I TOLD FOREIGN MINISTER THAT THE USG WAS PLEASED WITH SEEING THE INITIAL STEPS TAKEN BY THE GDRM TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. MOREOVER, USG IS PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THESE SMALL STEPS APPARENTLY REFLECT A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE BY MALAGASY AUTHORITIES WHICH WE TRUST WILL CONTINUE AND EXPAND.

3. I COMMENTED SPECIFICALLY ON THE IMPROVED TONE OF RADIO MADAGASCAR SINCE MY CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER ON NOV 25, WHEN THE LATTER AND I DISCUSSED ATTITUDINAL PROBLEMS. I ALSO NOTED THAT PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY MALAGASY LEADERS HAVE BECOME LESS HOSTILE TO THE US, BUT ADDED THAT THERE ARE SOME GDRM PRACTICES WHICH WE FIND OBJECTIONABLE. I CITED SEVERAL ACTIVITIES OF NORTH KOREANS IN TANANARIVE DURING PAST SIX MONTHS WHICH HAVE INCLUDED SHARP ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA THROUGH USE OF GDRM FACILITIES. RAKOTOMAVO DID NOT COMMENT DIRECTLY, BUT HE APPEARED SURPRISED THAT
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I WOULD DARE TO RAISE SUCH A SUBJECT WITH HIM AND HE MUTTERED SOMETHING ABOUT HOW MADAGASCAR HAS THROWN OFF ITS COLONIALIST YOKE. I WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT IN US EYES THE GDRM POLICY IS NOT YET ONE OF CLEAR NON-ALIGNMENT OR "TOUS AZIMUTS", ALTHOUGH SOME SMALL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE.

4. WE DID NOT DIRECTLY REFER TO MY DISCUSSIONS WITH

SOLOFOSON CONCERNING NASA. HOWEVER, I TOOK PARTICULAR NOTE OF THE UNRESOLVED MATTER OF INDEMNIFICATION FOR ESSO AND CALTEX, REMINDING THE MINISTER OF US LAW WHICH REQUIRES PROMPT, ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE INDEMNIFICATION OR US WOULD TAKE VARIOUS ACTIONS. BUT ABOVE ALL, I SAID, A COMPLETE IMPROVEMENT IN OFFICIAL GDRM ATTITUDE TOWARD THE US IS BOTH POSSIBLE AND NECESSARY IN ORDER TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING ISSUES AND TO RETURN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP TO A SOUND FOOTING. RAKOTOMAVO AGREED, ADDING THAT THE GDRM BELIEVES THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION APPEARS TO HAVE A PROFOUND UNDERSTANDING OF THE POLITICAL NEEDS OF THE VARIOUS PEOPLES IN THIS REGION, AND THEREFORE BOTH SIDES WILL BE WORKING IN THE SAME DIRECTION.

5. COMMENT: IN PREVIOUS MEETINGS WITH RAKOTOMAVO, I HAVE NOT FOUND HIM TO BE INCISIVE, NOR PARTICULARLY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS, EVEN AS LATE AS LAST WEEK WHEN HE RETURNED FROM TANZANIA AND MOZAMBIQUE, LEAVE MUCH TO BE DESIRED. HOWEVER, AT THIS MEETING, FOR THE FIRST TIME HE DID NOT SEEK TO BE CONTENTIOUS WITH REGARD TO ANY STATEMENT I MADE. HE IS, OF COURSE, ONLY MINDING THE STORE AND DOING THE NECESSARY ROUTINE WHILE PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA ENJOYS THE MORE GLAMOROUS ASPECTS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

6. I INTERPRET RAKOTOMAVO'S FRIENDLIER ATTITUDE TODAY TO BE THE RESULT OF A TREND INSIDE THE GDRM TO BE MORE FRIENDLY TO WESTERN COUNTRIES, WHILE NOT REDUCING THE LAVISH ATTENTION THE MALAGASY DISPOSE ON THE COMMUNIST

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COUNTRIES (FOR EXAMPLE, CUBAN LIBYAN AND YUGOSLAV DELEGATIONS PRESENTLY IN TANANARIVE.) IN MY ESTIMATION, RAKOTOMAVO IS NOT A SOURCE OF INFLUENCE TO BE RRECKONED WITH INSIDE THE GDRM. SHEINBAUM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TANANA00346
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770055-0371
Format: TEL
From: TANANARIVE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770234/aaaabefu.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0ddda1c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05-Apr-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3303158
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHARGE PAYS FAREWELL CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, MA, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0ddda1c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009